



News from

# Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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## Kind Emphasizes Need to Protect Troops

*Remains Concerned by Secretary Rumsfeld's Response to Questions about Armored Vehicles*

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) issued the following statement regarding the recent Pentagon announcement of more armored vehicles for troops in Iraq. The accelerated effort comes on the heels of publicly raised concerns about the lack of armored Humvees and trucks by a 278<sup>th</sup> National Guardsman while Department of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was recently visiting Iraq. The 278<sup>th</sup> deployed in November from Camp Shelby in Mississippi along with the 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry unit out of Eau Claire. Congressman Kind attended the send-off ceremony.

“Our troops are putting their lives on the line every single day. During my two visits to Iraq, I have seen firsthand their fortitude and courage on the ground, despite the challenges arising from the continuing insurgency. Their safety is paramount, and it is absolutely unacceptable for our soldiers to be scavenging through scrap heaps for metal so they can protect themselves against their attackers.

“I am pleased with the Pentagon’s announcement accelerating the effort to provide more armored vehicles to U.S. troops in Iraq, but I wonder why it took a publicly embarrassing moment for Secretary Rumsfeld in order to address this problem. It raises a red flag when the Secretary assures us in the Congress that our troops have what they need, but then faces questions from soldiers in Iraq about their lack of proper supplies. His assurances to us at home are contradictory to the reality on the ground, and that is troubling.

“I remain concerned that there is a systemic problem with understanding the needs of the troops. Before the 128<sup>th</sup> shipped overseas in November, it was brought to my attention that the unit lacked a sufficient supply of combat boots, desert camouflage and training rounds for combat drills. I was able to work with the chain of command to address the unit’s needs, ensuring that it was sufficiently outfitted before its departure. I continue to be in constant contact with our military liaisons, family coordinators, and soldiers on the ground in Iraq to make sure Wisconsin troops have everything they need.

“It also concerns me that the two armored vehicle companies under contract with the Pentagon have reported that they are operating at only 50% production capacity and that previous offers to ramp up production went unheeded by the Pentagon.

“We have a responsibility to support our troops in their mission. Congress has done its job by appropriating the funds, and there is no good excuse for their lack of protection. Secretary Rumsfeld said, ‘you go to war with the Army you have...it’s not a matter of money, it’s a matter of production and capability of doing it.’ The money is there, and the production capacity is there. When the safety of our troops is at stake, this response is unacceptable.”